

**United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Commercial Club DRAFT

Other names/site number: Case Hotel

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1100 S. Broadway

City or town: Los Angeles County: CA

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/ Clubhouse and
DOMESTIC/ Hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/ Hotel

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Brick and Terra Cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Commercial Club is a 13-story Renaissance Revival building completed in 1926 located at the corner of Broadway and 11th Street in downtown Los Angeles. The surrounding buildings are prominent buildings dating from the early twentieth century and is one block from the Broadway Theater and Commercial National Register District. The building is distinguished by two primary elevations, along Broadway and 11th Street that feature arched windows with terra cotta surrounds, all articulated with terra cotta. Recently undergoing a substantial rehabilitation for use as a boutique hotel, the exterior features have been restored, including restoration of the elaborate terra cotta surround of the main entrance on Broadway and the prominent entrance canopy on 11th Street.

Narrative Description

The Commercial Club building is a 13-story Renaissance Revival vertical block, generally rectilinear in plan with a classical tripartite composition conveyed by a horizontal division of base, shaft and cornice. The stylistic character is derived from its two formal elevations; Broadway (west elevation) and 11th

Street (north elevation). The main Broadway facade is composed of five vertical bays and the 11th Street facade is composed of seven vertical bays.

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There are two primary entrances which differentiate the original Commercial Club space from the remaining commercial-office space. The primary building entrance on Broadway, historically utilized by the Commercial Club, is offset and features a recessed, round arch, flanked by molded columns with a coffered ceiling of ornamental plaster inside the arch. Original bronze and plate glass doors set within the recessed entry open into the elevator lobby. The secondary entrance, at 11th Street is shaded by an original polychrome iron marquee.

The storefronts on both elevations had been modified through the replacement of original storefront windows and doors, however, the openings were intact and the original steel sash transoms are extant. The form and detail of the original storefront and transom has now been restored as part of the rehabilitation.

The building's two-story base is finished in rusticated terra cotta blocks with additional terra cotta and cast stone. At the second story level, the ornamentation includes a series of wide, rectangular windows set below a projecting, denticular cornice. There is an architrave band enhanced by applied, medallions and triangular forms, masks, lion heads, and stars, also at the second level.

The upper facades are standard brick walls, articulated by staggered quoins and spiral molding at the building's three street-facing corners. Both elevations feature grouped windows with terra cotta surrounds, columns and tracery, and metal spandrel panels that have a reeded texture on the surface.

The actual arches, which are the signature detail of the primary facades, have a Moorish motif, with a slightly pointed shape to the arch. There are terra cotta cornices at the 3rd, 11th, and 12th floors. The 11th and 12th floors have two additional cornices composed of dentil and an egg-and-dart molding. These cornices give strength to the design of the upper façade.

The primary façades are pierced by symmetrically placed window openings, with rectangular double-hung wood sash. Above the second story there are eight windows across each floor on the Broadway facade and twelve windows on each floor in the 11th Street façade. The central windows of both the Broadway and 11th Street facades feature grouped arched windows at the third and fourth floors embellished with terra cotta surrounds, columns, tracery, and metal spandrel panels. Remaining windows are symmetrically placed rectangular double-hung wood sash types.

The top section of both primary elevations features terra-cotta window surrounds with classical designs. Arched terra cotta framing surrounds the 12th and 13th-story windows. The roofing is articulated by a corbelled cornice that is topped by a band of curved tiles on the front face of the parapet surrounding the flat roof.

The building is topped with a corbelled cornice featuring a band of angled terra cotta roofing tiles mounted on the exterior edge of the parapet. The parapet conceals a flat roof covered in a mix of asphalt composition material. A two-story elevator house is situated on the southeastern section of the roof. The structure is not readily visible from the street level.

The south and east elevations are secondary, and were never intended to be visible. They only have a minor return of the quoins and cornices from the primary elevations accenting the corners. These elevations face the side parking lot (south elevation) and rear alley (east elevation). They are characterized only by exposed board form concrete and infill bricks with various wood and metal-framed windows set in incised openings. Historic-era painted signage is visible on the south elevation with the

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two separate painted billboards. A new elevator tower and fire stair enclosure has been appended to the south elevation as part of the rehabilitation, although minimally visible to the street view. Historically a large open panel roof neon sign dominated the skyline and is planned to be recreated as part of the rehabilitation project.

Interior

Extant interior features representing the original design include intact vaulted ceilings inside the Broadway Street lobby with remnants of original pilasters (portions were partially removed in the 1960s), intact marble flooring, intact wood paneling, and intact checkroom vestibule at the ground floor elevator lobby (Broadway entrance). Other notable features include the intact 3rd Floor Lounge, intact plaster elevator surrounds at some floors, original dining space at the 4th floor, an original racquet ball court on the 6th floor, and most unusual, a swimming pool on the 7th floor. The upper floors have historically, and will continue to function as hotel rooms.

Current Appearance

The building has recently completed a substantial rehabilitation for use as a boutique hotel. The rehabilitation has been carefully designed with an emphasis on conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The primary entrance to the hotel utilizes the Broadway entry. The major spaces of the interior, include the main entrance lobby, 4th floor dining room, 6th floor racquet ball court, and the 7th floor pool, all have been rehabilitated for ongoing use.

The most notable change to the Commercial Club building is the addition of an elevator and stair tower appended to the southeast corner of the building as part of the rehabilitation necessary to provide fire existing. This is a utilitarian addition with a smooth concrete finish that blends with the south elevation. The addition has been carefully evaluated and designed so that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Integrity

The Commercial Club Building maintains a high level of integrity in respect to its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building remains at its original location and the architectural appearance of the primary exterior design is intact., and has now undergone a complete rehabilitation. The Renaissance Revival style is applied to a classical tripartite skyscraper enhanced with terra cotta and cast stone ornamentation. The building features multiple cornices, oversized arched window surrounds, ornate columns and pilasters. The ornamentation and details of the primary elevations clearly reflect the original design. There were minor alterations to the first-floor storefronts which have now been restored, and the upper façade maintains the original materials and have also been restored.

The urban setting of the immediate location is relatively unchanged since the Commercial Club was built. A new stair shaft was added to the south elevation, which was always a tertiary elevation. The shaft and related modifications are not readily visible when viewing the primary facades.

The Commercial Club Building was erected in a part of downtown initially comprised of low-scale warehouses, transitioning to more substantial buildings lining Broadway. Several other Renaissance Revival buildings conforming to the mandated height-limit flanked both sides of Broadway. The appearance and context of the immediate area remains much the same today.

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The interior retains many original features, including the vaulted ceiling at the Broadway Street lobby which is also highlighted by extensive wood paneling. Other notable spaces include the original dining space at the fourth floor, the sixth-floor racquet ball court, and the original seventh floor swimming pool. The uppermost floors retain hotel room use. The Commercial Club Building retains its integrity of workmanship and clearly reflects the work of early twentieth century craftsmen. The Commercial Club Building also retains its integrity of association with the Commercial Club of Southern California because so many of the original spaces, such as the dining room and the swimming pool, and their unique physical materials, are intact were incorporated into the rehabilitation.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Period of Significance
1926 – 1932

Significant Dates
1926

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Curlett, Alexander and Beelman, Claud
Scofield Engineering Construction Company

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Commercial Club building is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance, under Criterion A in the area of Social History for its association with the Commercial Club, the social arm of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and as a significant example of the work of Curlett and Beelman, whose work helped form the urban skyline of Los Angeles. The period of significance is 1926-1932, from the building's completion until 1932, when the Cabrillo Club of Southern California, occupied the building, displacing the Commercial Club organization.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A, Social History:

The Commercial Club Building was constructed in 1925-1926 and designed by master architects Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman, principals of the firm Curlett and Beelman, whose work helped to form the urban skyline of Los Angeles. The Commercial Club of Southern California was the social arm of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce which contributed to the socioeconomic history of early twentieth century Los Angeles through its mission, membership roster and programming. The construction of the Commercial Club building was specifically designed to be a clubhouse facility and it lends itself to the unique historic features that were designed into the construction of the building.

The building was constructed in 1925-1926 under City of Los Angeles Building Permit Numbers 26164 and 31365. It was occupied by the Commercial Club of Southern California through 1932, when the organization ceased operation. After 1932, a new entity – the Cabrillo Club of Southern California – occupied the building using it for social hall and hotel purposes until 1941 when the building was renamed as the Cabrillo Hotel. By 1947 the building was renamed the Case Hotel, a moniker retained through the 1950s and into the 1960s. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) purchased the Commercial Club Building in 1965 and opened a social, short-term housing, job assistance, and rehabilitation facility that occupied the entire building. The YWCA occupied the building until 2004. Through its history the building's storefronts have been occupied by a variety of proprietors including the California Lamp Shade Manufacturing Company (circa 1932-1938), J. Pierce, a book and commercial printer (circa 1939), and most notably the Los Angeles Press Club (1937-1963).

Significance Under NRHP Criterion A: The Commercial Club of Southern California

The Commercial Club Building is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A as a property associated with the Commercial Club of Southern California, an organization that contributed significantly to the socioeconomic history of early twentieth century Los Angeles through its mission, membership roster, and programming.

The Commercial Club Building was designed for the Commercial Club of Southern California, an organization described as the social arm of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. It was to be a

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“business club,” organized by prominent oil industry figure J. Ward Cohen, adding to the vibrant Los Angeles private club scene. The Commercial Club of Southern California differed from the established clubs such as the Los Angeles Athletic Club (established 1880), the California Club (established 1887) or the Jonathan Club (established 1894), which were closely aligned with the tradition of British gentlemen’s clubs and elite American clubs of the East. The Commercial Club aimed to be more inclusive in its membership policies and was more specific in its mission. Rather than the purely social or athletic emphasis of the other area clubs “the Commercial Club [was] to promote the industrial and commercial development of Los Angeles.”¹ Club organizer J. Ward Cohen aspired to see the “6,000 or

more industries” of Los Angeles represented amongst the individual and corporate membership of the club. He hoped the club would “prove a distinctive stimulus to these several industries,” echoing his earlier stated desire to “promote good fellowship among business men in Southern California and to create friendliness between the various industries of the Southland.”²

Indeed, rather than strictly serving the social or recreational needs of the local elite, the Commercial Club was intended to act as a gathering place for L.A.’s swelling pool of boosters and business leaders, who were much in need of this type of association.

The Commercial Club of Southern California got its start in late 1923 with many prominent Angelenos joining, including the likes of film moguls Cecil B. DeMille and Harry Warner, as well as Moses Hamburger, owner of Hamburger's Department store, the largest such store on the Pacific Coast. Other members included Irving Hellman, director of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Hellman Commercial Trust and Savings Bank and Merchants National Bank, James Woods, vice-president of the Biltmore Hotel, and Michael Gore, president of the West Coast Theaters chain with over 480 movie houses. The publicity-minded club officials even sent President Calvin Coolidge a “solid California gold card of honorary membership.”³

Prior to organizing the Commercial Club of Southern California “Los Angeles, unlike New York, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco — in fact, practically every first-class city in the United States — [had] been without a Commercial Club.”⁴ Given the close connection between the Club and the Chamber of Commerce it should come as no surprise that while the Commercial Club of Southern California built their own facility, they located their offices in the Chamber’s new building. The Chamber of Commerce was located just one block from where the Commercial Club Building would be erected at the corner of Broadway and Twelfth Street.⁵

In early 1925, the group announced they would build a clubhouse to rival those of the establishment clubs. At the time only two other clubs had facilities comparable to those proposed by the Commercial

¹ “CLUB - Los Angeles Athletic Club;” “History - Jonathan Club;” Diana Kendall, *Members Only: Elite Clubs and the Process of Exclusion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 23-25; William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash, *The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America’s Millionaires* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), 1, “History – Jonathan Club,” Jonathan Club, <https://www.jc.org/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModuleandpageid=358611andssid=266616andvnf=1> (accessed June 23, 2018.); “CLUB - Los Angeles Athletic Club,” Los Angeles Athletic Club, <http://www.laac.com> (accessed January 10, 2014); “Commercial Club Signs Long Lease,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1925.

² “Girl Signs First Life Member of Business Club,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1925; “Club Plans New Building” *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1924, 21, “Commercial Club Signs Long Lease;” “Club Plans New Building.”

³ “Club Plans New Building;” “Cinema Division for Club,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 6, 1924; “Coolidge Sends Thanks,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1924.

⁴ “Commercial Club Signs Long Lease.”

⁵ Los Angeles City Directory, Los Angeles County Directory Publishers, 1925 and 1926.

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Club of Southern California: the ten story Los Angeles Athletic Club building, the first of its kind on the Pacific Coast., built in 1911, featuring guest and meeting rooms, a gymnasium, Turkish baths and a sixth-floor swimming pool. The Jonathan Club, the other large downtown club, moved into their new clubhouse in 1925. Similar to the Commercial Club Building, the Jonathan Club occupied a building with full athletic facilities, dining rooms, lounges, and 250 guest rooms. The California Club, another social club of the well-heeled, at the time occupied only part of the Wilcox Building and didn't build their own clubhouse until 1929-1930.⁶

With the successful enrollment of many Los Angeles business leaders, the Commercial Club soon went to work on recruiting regional interests, announcing "a membership campaign in the numerous thriving cities surrounding Los Angeles as well as those of Ventura County."⁷ At the close of 1926, enrollment figures swelled to more than 2,500 members, representing a significant swath of Southern California industry.⁸ This figure marks the zenith of the Commercial Club membership strength. It was at this time that, amongst great fanfare, the Club opened the doors to its new clubhouse on November 5, 1926.

The new building was designed by the prominent firm Curlett and Beelman Architects and had the most up to date amenities expected by the Club's members. The first and second floors of the new building were used as commercial rental facilities. A spacious club lobby faced Broadway on the ground floor in a space visible to the pedestrians. The third floor included offices, lounges, a billiard room, card room, grill and a check-room, while the kitchen and the private main dining room with seating for 125 people took up the fourth level. The fifth floor, called "Cercle des Dames," the circle of women, was dedicated to the needs of the member's wives. The sixth floor was equipped with a gymnasium and Turkish bath, while the main plunge, private locker rooms, lockers, athletic offices, instructors' rooms and barber shop comprised the seventh floor. The remaining upper floors were devoted to guest rooms, with a total of 126 rooms, each with a shower or bath and outside exposure.⁹

The Commercial Club, recognized by Mayor George Cryer as an organization contributing to "the upbuilding of the city," was lauded in the press for financing and constructing a headquarters so shortly after incorporation. During the building's construction, the *Los Angeles Times* speculated it "[would] be one of the most modernly equipped institutions of its kind on the Pacific Coast,"¹⁰ echoing the paper's previously stated belief that it would be "one of the finest club buildings in the West."

The Times and other newspapers ran frequent updates as to the building's ascent and included the project in coverage of other sizable construction undertakings perceived to be of great civic importance. In addition to pieces documenting the completion of single floors or informing readers that the Commercial Club membership list was "growing like [its] new home," articles excitedly chronicled such seemingly trivial items as the selection and installation of drapes, rugs, furnishings, and a "battery of high-speed elevators."¹¹ Similarly, public interest and community pride necessitated that even relatively inconsequential decisions such as higher-than-anticipated membership figures requiring J. Ward Cohen "to enlarge the dining room plans of the building" be dutifully reported by the press.¹²

⁶ Jennifer Trotoux, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: California Club* (Pasadena: Architectural Resources Group, 2010), section 8, 2-3.

⁷ "Commerce Club to Seek Members in Near-by Cities," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1925.

⁸ "Commerce Club Names Its Leaders," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1926: part 2:2.

⁹ "Commercial Club Signs Long Lease," and "New Club will Open this Week," *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1926: part 1:15.

¹⁰ "Crews Rush Furnishing of Building," *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1926: E2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Membership Increases in Commercial Club," *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 1925:11.

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The Club's November 5, 1926 opening warranted extensive write-ups of Commercial Club Building amenities and was of such notoriety that a prominent *Los Angeles Times* advertisement for Mason and Hamlin Ampico Pianos made note of their product being selected for "the fine new Commercial Club."

Social club organizations were an important part of communities across American during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They offered opportunities for members with mutual interests and common backgrounds to develop local contacts and increase their social networks. Membership in organizations like the Commercial Club provided social and recreational opportunities, but also a place to

conduct business in a more relaxed environment. The Commercial Club sought to help the existing businesses expand their markets as well as to bring industries together to work toward mutual benefit.

While the goal of encouraging industrial commercial progress were similar to those of the Chamber of Commerce – the development of Los Angeles – at the time the Chamber focused most its energies on drawing new industry to the area (and residents through the All Year Club). The Commercial Club rather promoted the cultivation of existing business. To this end the Club created industry-specific subgroups designed to facilitate professional cooperation and growth. They formed an in-house "better business organization... for the promotion of improved administrative and sales methods and for the discussion of general problems of each class of business." Always keeping with the social aspect, the Club gave frequent parties, banquets and lectures to entertain its membership.¹³ Members also worked with the Chamber of Commerce and civic leaders contributing to L.A.'s economic welfare through aggressive promoting the area to out-of-state interests and helping secure passage of a significant water project construction bond. They lobbied for business-friendly freight rates and harbor charges and engaged in general civic betterment efforts such as raising funds for the 1924 Paris Olympics and helped to lure the 1932 Olympic Games to Los Angeles, among many other civic activities and booster endeavors.¹⁴

The group's legacy is evident in the economic vitality of present-day L.A.¹⁵ The economic collapse of 1929 effected the Commercial Club of Southern California harder than most of the other social clubs in Los Angeles. While the Club enjoyed initial popularity, by the time the depression hit a national downward trend in the popularity of gentlemen's clubs was taking its toll. Coupled with a membership focused on a business community suffering from the shrunken economy and a mission similar to the Chamber of Commerce, the Commercial Club was doomed. The Club disbanded in early 1932.¹⁶

¹³ "Club Plans New Building" and "Cinema Division for Club."

¹⁴ "Business to be Studied in New Club," *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1924: part 2:2; "Harbor Rates Issue Debated," *Los Angeles Time*, April 2, 1931: part 2:2; "Olympic Plans Explained," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1924: part 3:1.

¹⁵ "Coolidge Sends Thanks;" "Cinema Division for Club;" "History," Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.lachamber.com/webpage-directory/about/aboutchamber-history/> (accessed June 23, 2018)

¹⁶ James M. Mayo, *The American Country Club: Its Origins and Development* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 34; James D. Nolan, *Glory, Darkness, Light: A History of the Union League Club of Chicago* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 210; Paul Porzelt, *The Metropolitan Club of New York* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 162-163; A November 1931 article entitled "Foreign Dry Effort Shown" is one of the last references to the Commercial Club found in the *Los Angeles Times* database, raising the likelihood that the organization folded altogether at some point near the time of the article's publication. "Foreign Dry Effort Shown," *Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 1931: part 2:1; A February 1940 *Los Angeles Times* article entitled "Land Titles to be Cleared" references an unpaid Commercial Club Building tax assessment of \$76,756 that first fell into arrears in 1931. The building appears to have been sold to P.L. Exley for "back taxes and penalties amounting to \$124,000" shortly thereafter. "Land Titles to be Cleared," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1940:part 2:1; "Tax Title Suits Move Begun," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1940. 10.

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Significance Under Criterion C: Curlett and Beelman as a Prominent Los Angeles Firm

The founder of the Commercial Club of Southern California, J. Ward Cohen, selected the architectural firm of Curlett and Beelman to design the club's headquarters – a thirteen story multi-use building at the intersection of Broadway and 11th Street in downtown Los Angeles. The firm of Curlett and Beelman firm contributed heavily to downtown skyline of Los Angeles, conceived the Commercial Club's stately Renaissance Revival style headquarters, which, upon its completion, was praised as "one of the most modernly designed institutions of its kind in the city."¹⁷

For the Commercial Club, Curlett and Beelman created a clubhouse in which the city's burgeoning class of successful businessmen would feel both comfortable and proud. After entering through a wood paneled lobby and walking across its marble floor, members could choose between enjoying a meal in the stately fourth-floor dining room and partaking in amenities such as the barber shop, billiards room, Turkish bath, sixth-floor handball court, or the seventh-floor swimming pool. Commercial Club physical director Jim Donahue led exercise-conscious club members through workout regimens in the building's well-appointed gymnasium, where it was hoped that strenuous activity would, "brighten the minds and reduce the embarrassing flabby muscles of... local businessmen."

The relationship between the architects Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman was established in 1921, when Beelman joined the firm William Curlett and Son, which had been operated by Alexander Curlett since 1914. Born in Bellefontaine, Ohio, Claud Beelman received the Harvard Scholarship from the Architectural League of America in 1905. Between 1911 and 1919, he practiced architecture throughout the South and the Midwest, and by 1921 had received his California architectural license and arrived in Los Angeles amidst a period of significant commercial development. Alexander Curlett was born in San Francisco in 1881. He attended Columbia University and upon graduation joined his father's architectural practice, creating the firm William Curlett and Son, with offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The young Curlett managed the firm's Los Angeles office. In 1913 he designed the Lloyds Bank Building, a Beaux Arts style commercial building in downtown Los Angeles. William Curlett passed in 1914, leaving Alexander to continue the firm until 1921 when the partnership of Curlett and Beelman, Inc. was formed.

While in practice together from 1921 to approximately 1928, the firm of Curlett and Beelman, Inc. designed major buildings in the Southern California region including Los Angeles, Pasadena, Long Beach, and Culver City. The firm designed and collaborated on numerous buildings now designated as City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Designated properties, primarily in the Renaissance Revival style designed by Curlett and Beelman include:

- **Garfield Building**, a 1929 Art Deco-style vertical block (City of Los Angeles HCM Number 121),
- **Park Plaza Hotel**, a 1925 Neo-Gothic-style hotel (HCM Number 267),
- **Roosevelt Building**, a 1927 Italian Renaissance Revival-style vertical block (HCM Number 355),
- **Barker Brothers Building**, a 1926 Renaissance Revival-style vertical block (HCM Number 356),
- **Board of Trade Building**, a 1927 Beaux Arts and Neoclassical style vertical block (NRHP No. 07001439),

¹⁷ "Crews Rush Furnishing of Building,"

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- **Union Bank and Trust Building**, a 1922 Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts-style vertical block (HCM Number 1030),
- **Harris Newmark Building**, a 1926 Renaissance Revival building (HCM Number 345),
- **Security Building**, a 1928 Renaissance Revival-style building in Phoenix, Arizona (NRHP No. 85002081),
- **Culver Hotel**, a 1924 Renaissance Revival-style building in Culver City, CA (NRHP No. 97000296), and
- **Cooper Arms**, a 1924 Renaissance Revival-style building in Long Beach, CA (NRHP No. 00001538).

The firm dissolved in 1928, approximately three years after the Commercial Club Building was completed. Both architects continued to be active in Los Angeles. In 1929, Curlett designed the

Hollywood Equitable Building prior to being appointed as the Los Angeles representative for the United States Public Works Administration, and later as the local manager for the Federal Housing Administration. Alexander Curlett died in 1942. In 1930, Claud Beelman designed the Eastern Columbia Building and the Sun Realty Building, both in Los Angeles. He later worked with the firm Allison and Allison in the design of the Hollywood Post Office. Beelman designed the Superior Oil Building in 1953, which is regarded as his last major work prior to his death in 1963.

The Commercial Club Building as a Work of Curlett and Beelman

Identified as Curlett and Beelman Job No. 2509, the Renaissance Revival style Commercial Club Building was designed in the archetypal aesthetic for the early twentieth century American skyscraper. It was based on the Renaissance period palazzo and classical Beaux Arts ideology but the form was elongated to fit the programming of a commercial hotel building on a rectangular lot in the central business district of Los Angeles.

Character-defining features of the Beaux Arts and Renaissance Revival styles, and expressed clearly on the Commercial Club include:

- symmetrical facades,
- a rusticated masonry base,
- belt coursing at multiple levels,
- decorative exterior wall surfaces,
- quoins at the building corners,
- principal windows with arcaded surrounds, and
- a roofline parapet with a prominent, projecting cornice.

The Commercial Club Building was designed to achieve the maximum allowable height limit of 150 feet established by the Los Angeles City Council in 1911, allowed for 13-stories. The design of the Commercial Club Building was reviewed and approved by the City of Los Angeles Municipal Art Commission on January 6, 1926. Its Renaissance Revival aesthetic is characterized by classical tripartite division applied to skyscrapers, and enhanced with terra cotta and cast stone ornamentation. The facades include multiple cornices, oversized arched window surrounds, ornate columns and pilasters, and a motif of stars, masks, and lion heads. The Commercial Club Building is consistent in look and feel with Curlett and Beelman's most applauded designs while maintaining its own distinctive appearance.

Commercial Club
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bibliography

Becker, Wendy I. Tinsley. *Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part 1: Evaluation of Significance: Commercial Club Building*. Los Angeles, 2014.

Kendall, Diana. *Members Only: Elite Clubs and the Process of Exclusion*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

Los Angeles City Directories.

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Mayo, James M. *The American Country Club: Its Origins and Development*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

McCash, William Barton and June Hall McCash. *The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1989.

Nolan, James D. Glory. *Darkness Light: A History of the Union League Club of Chicago*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004.

Porzelt, Paul. *The Metropolitan Club of New York*. New York: Rizzoli, 1982.

Southard, John and Wendy L. Tinsley Becker. *Historic-Cultural Monument Application: Commercial Club Building*. Los Angeles, CA: City of Los Angeles, 2014.

Trotoux, Jennifer. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: California Club*. Pasadena, CA: Architectural Resources Group, 2010.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.039468 N Longitude: 118.258880 W

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is defined as Lot 513-901-7001, in Los Angeles County, California, and City of Los Angeles Tract 2289, Lot 23.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is justified as the entirety of the parcel where the building was constructed.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Tara J. Hamacher and Roger Brevoort
organization: Historic Consultants
street & number: 256 S. Robertson Blvd. #2401
city or town: Beverly Hills state: CA zip code: 90211
e-mail Tara@HistoricConsultants.com
telephone: 877-268-8481
date: August 20, 2021

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Historic Photograph



Figure 1: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 1925.
Rendering of the proposed Commercial Club Building, July 5, 1925.
Source: Los Angeles Times.

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Historic Photograph



Figure 2: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 1926.
View of principal intersection at 11th and Broadway.
Source: USC Digital Library Los Angeles Examiner Collection, 1920-1961.

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Historic Photograph



Figure 3: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 1928.
View of the 4th Floor Dining Room at the Commercial Club Building.
Source: Los Angeles Public Library Digital Photo Collection.

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Historic Photograph



Figure 4: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 1932.
View up Broadway with building on the right including original painted “Commercial Club” signage comprising the upper wall section, and steel lattice and neon roof billboard advertising the Sunday Examiner, with the Examiner Building located on the opposite corner of 11th and Broadway intersection.
Source: USC Digital Library Los Angeles Examiner Collection, 1920-1961.

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Location Map

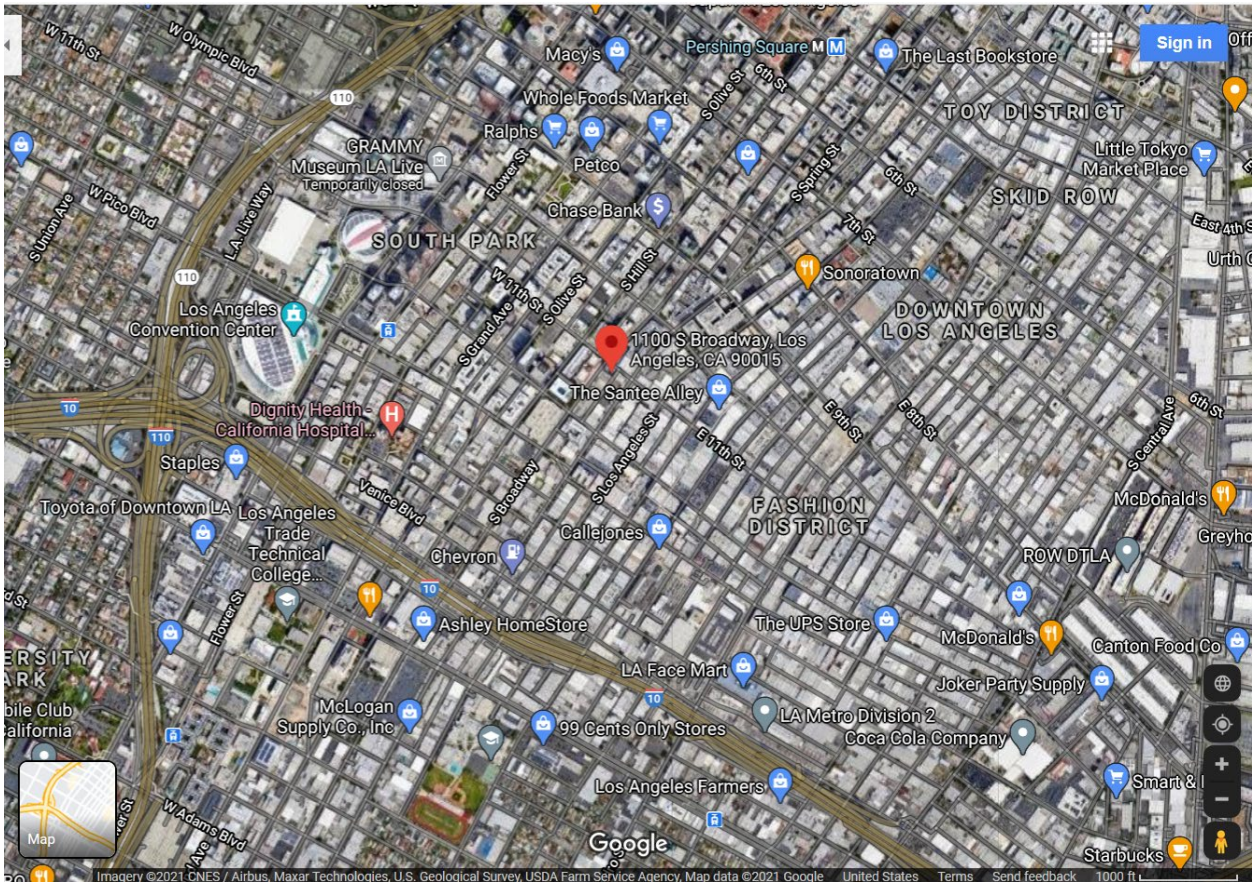


Figure 5: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 2021
Google Earth location map showing location in greater downtown Los Angeles 2021,
1100 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90015

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Location Map

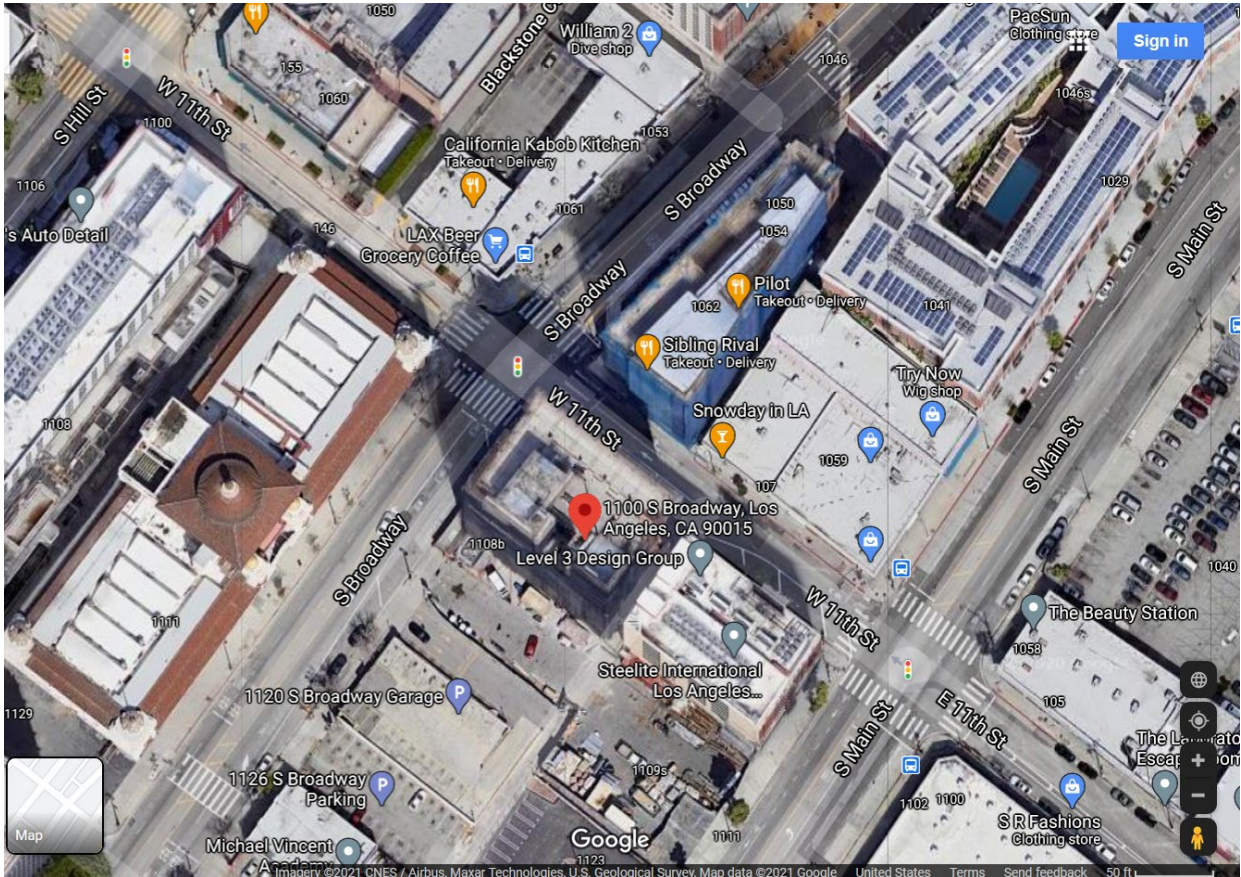


Figure 6: Commercial Club of Southern California Building, 2021
Google Earth location map showing location in greater downtown Los Angeles 2021,
1100 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90015

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Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Commercial Club Building

City or Vicinity: Los Angeles

County: Los Angeles

State: CA

Name of Photographer: Tara J. Hamacher

Date of Photographs: August 2021

Location of Original Digital Files: Historic Consultants, 256 S. Robertson Blvd. #2401, Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Number of Photographs: 22

Photo #1 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0001)

Primary façade at 11th Street, looking southwest.

Photo #2 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0002)

Primary façades on 11th Street & Broadway, looking southeast.

Photo #3 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0003)

Primary façade on Broadway, looking east.

Photo #4 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0004)

Broadway façade and view of south façade showing painted wall signs, looking northeast.

Photo #5 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0005)

View of Terra Cotta and brick details on façade from Broadway & 11th Street, looking southeast.

Photo #6 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0006)

Detail view of upper Broadway façade showing cornice with Terra Cotta and brick details, looking southeast.

Photo #7 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0007)

Detail view of upper 11th Street façade showing cornice with Terra Cotta and brick details, looking southeast.

Photo #8 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0008)

Detail of lower Broadway façade showing Terra Cotta and brick details, looking east.

Photo #9 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_0009)

Detail of lower 11th Street façade showing Terra Cotta and brick details, looking east.

Photo #10 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00010)

Detail of 11th Street storefront with marquee over entrance, looking south.

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Photo #11 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00011)
Detail of Broadway entrance with original door, looking southeast.

Photo #12 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00012)
Interior of main lobby entrance with elevator lobby, looking west.

Photo #13 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00013)
Interior of main elevator lobby, looking east.

Photo #14 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00014)
View of historic ceiling and wall details at 3rd floor now hotel room, looking southeast.

Photo #15 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00015)
View of historic ceiling and windows at 3rd floor now hotel room, looking northeast.

Photo #16 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00016)
4th Floor Ballroom showing historic windows and details, looking northwest.

Photo #17 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00017)
4th Floor Ballroom showing historic windows and details, looking northwest.

Photo #18 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00018)
4th Floor Ballroom showing historic windows and details, looking north.

Photo #19 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00019)
6th Floor racquetball court turned into hotel room, looking north.

Photo #20 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00020)
6th Floor racquetball court turned into hotel room, looking north.

Photo #21 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00021)
7th Floor Pool room converted to hotel room, looking southeast.

Photo #22 (CA_LosAngelesCounty_CommercialClub_00022)
View from rooftop looking on to the Broadway Commercial and Theatre National Register
Historic District which this property sits just outside of, view looking north.